



News Release

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Utah Department of Health to Launch Utah Notification & Information System

(Salt Lake City, UT) – The Utah Department of Health has entered the final stages of development of the Utah Notification and Information System (UNIS) and will launch the system in the next few months. UNIS is a statewide communications system that can distribute alerts, announcements and other information in the event of an emergency.

Through UNIS, voice notifications can be sent to home, office and cell phones, while text-based information can be sent by fax, pager or email. “UNIS is able to contact large groups of users with critical information, within a small period of time,” said Dean Penovich, UNIS Project Manager at the Utah Department of Health (UDOH).

The system will use Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping to call specific geographic areas within the State. Multiple state and local agencies will be able to set geographic parameters for any area in Utah and automatically create a call-list of all publicly listed households and businesses within the defined area. The system will then send voice or text messages to citizens within that area in case of an emergency.

While UNIS is managed by the UDOH, the system allows participants from various state and local agencies and organizations to receive and send notifications for both urgent and routine incidents and events.

People who receive a UNIS call should listen closely and follow any instructions provided. UNIS may be used in the future for a variety of purposes depending on the

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Page 2 of 2 - Utah Department of Health to Launch the Utah Notification & Information System

agency or organization sending the message. Contacting targeted populations regarding hazardous material spills, lost children, or crime spree are all potential uses for UNIS.

Once operational, UNIS will be able to place approximately 7,800 calls per hour. This is based on a 30 second recorded phone message and using 104 phone lines. Emails and pager notifications will be sent much quicker. If faxes are sent through the system, the amount of calls that can be placed per hour is reduced.

Through a cooperative agreement, Davis and Weber counties will house remote computer-based systems which will greatly increase the overall phone line capacity for UNIS and GIS notifications statewide.

UNIS is a key component of Utah's emergency preparedness efforts. Besides direct notification to the public, UNIS functions as a central web site for information dissemination and collaboration among partner agencies. It contains a document management feature that allows participating agencies to get up-to-date information and protocols in routine and emergency situations on a variety of subjects. UNIS also includes a secure online discussion forum and bulletin board feature, facilitating ongoing discussions about events or protocols. The system can be used to coordinate efforts and track updated information and messages.

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The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death; assuring access to affordable, quality health care; and promoting healthy lifestyles.